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Introduction

When I wake up in the morning, the first thing to do is say “Hello, I am safe in the Netherlands, don’t worry about me” to my friend, families in front of screen. This repeats every day. They might have a more comfortable life than me on the other side of world being pandemic about Covidsituation in here. During the lockdown time, I spend an average of over 10 hours per day sitting in front of my computer, enjoying the fresh, vivid, user friendly, infinite virtual world online. I gradually forget about gender, nations, locations... I lost the track of time. In this virtual world, I am a piece of code, or singularity, swimming through all kinds of spaces with different methods of communication. In here, I don’t need to announce myself as an independent identity I can choose to be special, or be one of the whole. The questions arise: Do I still need my identity? Do I still need a reality? Do I still need my body? The origin of those questions is “who am I”. More specifically, who am I is not a single value, it is a coalition of all the components. In this essay, I am going to talk about the process of working on my graduation project “Unframed”, which reflects on my existence.

Over the past months I have been working on improving my command of narrative in my films. For my final project I would like to continue working on the short experimental film, titled Unframed. This film is about how I connect with the absurdity of the reality that I find myself in. The work so far was made during the time of the Covid 19 pandemic, when Dutch society had been locked down from the middle of March to the beginning of August. During that period, I experienced the disconnection between my physical body and mental awareness. More specifically, my body was isolated within an eight square-meter room. All this time my awareness travelled through the internet and through propaganda generated by social media: “News” in online society; “The broken relationship between China and America”; “The Covid virus is made as a chemical weapon by the Chinese military”; “Black lives matter”; “Refugees were rejected at the Hungarian border”....The most influential value that I perceived from this mass of information are numbers and conflicted statements. It brings to me a feeling of being an outcast in the western context. Mentally, I could be falling apart anytime because of this vulnerable global situation. So, to make my struggle more rational, I filtered it down to three main themes:

1) “How to deal with the paradox that when identity is constructed by physical reality, it is at the same time deconstructed by virtual reality”;

2) “The play of Media manipulations”;

3) “My life is defined by numbers and data”.

I have been working on methods of visual storytelling throughout the lockdown period, by making 3D characters, dialogues, various activities - within a virtual environment. But the fact remains that those elements are more related to emotional self-expression. The images in my work are abstractions, a personal response to events; they reflect the feeling of distancing and being an outsider. The Covid times amplify these feelings to a larger extent. However, when it comes to a film with clear narratives, I did the first experiment during the lockdown. I attempted to translate the emotion of being deconstructed by social structures, to visual elements, mainly by creating virtual environments through a 3D program. I have not fully succeeded in transforming personal emotions to rational film structures, especially how the elements interact with each other and produce context. Therefore, there are a few points that I want to address regarding the images I make: to figure out the conflicts of identity in specific times and specific situations; to clarify my own position in this context. The outcome of my further experiments will involve certain adjustments and achievements: I want the work to express these uncertain, paradoxical situations. This requires a re-assessment of the elements in my work in order to communicate more directly. On the basis of my educational and cultural background, I barely feel a sense of belonging. So, these questions are amplified in Covid times, and the large themes of the current day appear superficial. I would like to go deeper and invite people to slow down and not so easily come to judgment. I would like to use the film I have been working on as an experimental bed. I would like to let people reconsider the relation between humans and technologies.

P1:Towards motion in space

My first bachelor was in Visual Communication Design in China. It was focused on how to use design strategies that transform complex structures, data, certain information into a dynamic visual form, which makes it more intuitively understandable and interesting for an audience. The method of design strategies are mainly involved with typography design, motion graphics, moving images, data visualisation. At that moment, I was aesthetically influenced by the work of Kandinsky, and the De Stijl art movement (c. 1917) in the Netherlands (later it became one of my driving forces to study in the Netherlands). The power of the combination of Dots, Line, Surface, and the minimalistic way of presenting colours from their work brings an infinite imagination for me to illustrate its harmonious resonance in three-dimensional representational space.

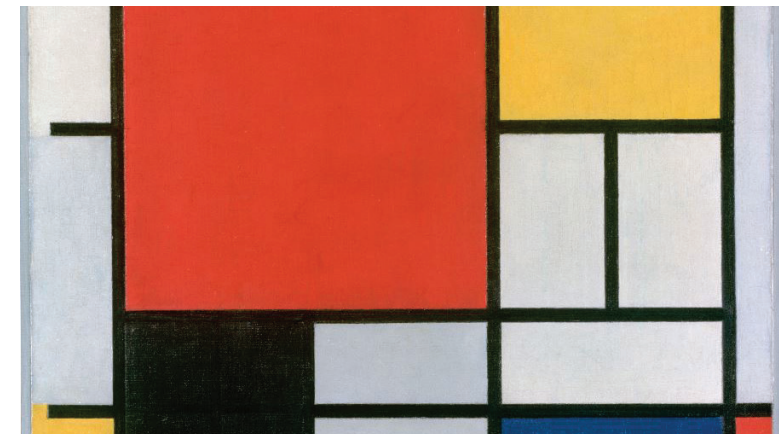
The performance of those elements show certain dynamics, floating with vivid rhythm in a mystic space. I could dive into those rhythms, following my intuition, improvising with them. In fact, the inspiration from De Stijl art movement and work of Kandinsky not only imposes a crucial impact on how I articulate visual forms, but also brings up a dilemma on whether these design strategies for me have limitations.

There are similarities between visual communication design and the work that influenced me: they both mention “dynamics”. The difference is that “Dynamics” in visual communication design means motion of information, principle of moving (linguistic syntax, structures) included images and layout. It is graphical, illustrative, straight-forward. But for the work that I was inspired by the idea of “Dynamics” emphasises the internal rhythm made up by various elements, synthesising a particular three-dimensional atmosphere throughout the performance of visual elements.

Here the “dynamic” is spatial, enlightened, in-depth.
After realising this I decided to take another art study that allowed me to discover mediums that represent “Dynamics” in such a way.



<Intersecting Lines,>-Wassily Kandinsky-1923



<Composition en rouge, jaune, bleu et noir>- Piet Mondriaan, 1921



<Orange>-Vasily Kandinsky-1923

My second bachelor in the Netherlands was called Time Based Design. It used to be called Scenography and changed at the time I stepped into the Minerva art academy in Groningen. Compared with Scenography, Time based Design offered me more possibilities to experience the amazing part of contemporary theatre art. During the period of studying there, a personal definition of contemporary theatre art formed: I was no longer limited by the material such as costume, stage lights, props and so on, that has already made for a scenario. Here a theatre play would not only be presented on stage, surrounded by hundreds of seats; elements of the show, such as dubbing, installation, performance... can be more experimental. Based on the experiments we did, I started to play with various elements in theatre, interpreting the “dynamics” I had discovered in De Stijl aesthetics. I also noticed that there are two major elements that are inseparably connected with my interests: Time and Body. I was interested in how “Time” is a value affirmed by human consciousness, and how communication of body movements in space can represent its existence. Most of the visual research in my early practice is very much an abstract and broad work. I primarily perform with my body, and create a certain composition in combination with the values which are represented in the same context. More precisely, in terms of different context, performance starts with the internal relationship between emotion and body, the motivation for its creation. These motivations will be transformed and expanded by external relations, announced by body moments that engage with complex interaction between soundscape, interior composition, moving image and so forth.

P2: Researching (past) method

In other words, if I intend to present the theme, such as “my identity is being lost”, I would start by discovering my central feeling of how my identity is embodied within a larger context, such as my lived experience. I grew up in an industrial city Chengdu located in south west of China, which has a population is over 20 million people. From the age of 3 to 11, I lived in Tibet, and moved to the Netherlands when I was 21. To provide a context in which I grew up, historically technological development brought rapid urbanisation and modern infrastructure in both Chengdu and Tibet. Whilst a more sufficient internet system has been built in Chengdu, Tibet has been developed to accommodate tourism and has become more industrialised. Local people have shifted from a nomadic lifestyle to urban lifestyle. Cultural influences: In Tibet: shamanism, veneration of nature, animals, the deeply influence of Tibetan Buddhism in every single family. In Chengdu (my hometown): I honestly don’t know what exactly it is, because culture has already been entangled by the development of post-modernism and post-industrialism. Perhaps local customs can be seen as a visual presentation of what Chengdu’s culture used to be.

This brief biographical account indicates the circumstance that I am confronted with. I experienced an alienation that constant migration, presenting the dilemma of where I belong (particular location, culture or ideology). This feeling of alienation motivates me to discover a theatre performance that allows me to visually translate this abstract form, which can be associated with body languages. If I represent it as a condition: Intensively breathing, using all the strength on moving my body parts. Later these initial visual elements will coalesce with a larger context that is presented in theatre space: In dark space, ghost lights flickering in front of the white metal wall which has cracks on its surface. We see a figure running towards us on the wall and collide in it, the force pushes him back. With the ragged breathing, he stands up and repeatedly collides with the wall.

P3: From stage to stage

Reflecting on my theatre practice, If I only focus on the single elements I would be limited, instead of thinking of the connections between things (to the environment and to culture and to specific times which the body inhabits). On the other hand, through the time of experimenting with theatre performance with different strategies, particularly in the performances that involve body experiments, my previous recognition of social and historical constitutions, nationality, race, culture cannot provide the basis belief in shaping my core identity. There is nothing about being “Chinese” that naturally binds me...nationality, racially or culturally. Consciousness is achieved through historical experience of contradictory social realities, that ends up being deconstructed as multiple fragments in the wheel. This leads us to a more contemporary conversation: What if I break up the figuration of the body? Is it mechanical? virtual? digital? If it reformulates as another format, does it also presents its true meaning and prove its existence?

Abstracting the value of the body became a part of my visual research throughout the time of studying theatre art. On the stage, I started to think carefully about what is the direct information presented by the figure through its body of the character or I see the body languages as the embodiment of something which has more symbolic information than simply the body- it has [“symbolic ballast”] it carries meaning with it.

John Cage's performance 4'33 (1952) is an enlightening example that illustrates the abstract idea of playing the piano on stage in an abstract but progressive way. Like most pianists do, he stands on the stage and faces the audience, greeting them and preparing to play. The difference is that before getting ready to play, he solemnly clicks the time counting button on the clock suggesting the start of the first movement, and closes the keyboard case silently sitting on the bench. Within the 4minutes 33seconds of playing, he repeats the action of clicking the clock button and closing the keyboard case in a certain rhythm, until the concert is finished. The body language of John Cage in this performance demonstrates a signal that there is something more infinite, more meaningful to feel, to absorb, to experience, rather than only the perceptions that are based on the concentrations of principles, structures of how to play. It is implied that the stage where Cage performed is a ritual place where he invites all





the people to freely experience what he is saying: “would you mind joining me in this silence play?”

However, is it completely silent in that space while he performs? I only have the chance to see this performance it in front of a screen, but I could imagine that sounds of breathing in different rhythms and weight, sounds of murmurs and echo, sounds of clock turning, sounds of nervous system operation and blood circulation... these elements assemble as another kind of concert performing on that stage, announcing that “silence does not exist” or rather, our perception of silence is challenged and questioned. Silence is a construct. John Cage’s approach to the performance of 4.33 had a profound impact on how I approached visual format in theatre. Throughout my time in Time Based Design, I understood the stage as a net that connects all of the components –light sets, installations, performance, sounds, and so forth –together. Horizontally, the relationship between components and the net constitute a system that “one component + one component on net = more/infinity, net = zero”.

It means that net(stage) is variable, it is not simply decided by the attributes of its components. It cannot be meaningful if separated from the various elements. In this algorithm, the meaning of visual representation of those components has been altered to something more progressive. This view fits more into the context of the present “networked society”. The net becomes more diverse, more flexible in the construction as the whole.

With the time of experiencing my system in theatre, I was aware that my research and experience of performance, pointing to topics of “body-bodiless transformation”, are unable to be instantiated by components that its symbolic meaning formulates by “past experience”, the experience that has contradictory and not sympathetic in nowadays conversation. Imagine if the topic of performance is about “how to be a post human”, the stage is built like a disco bar, fake paintings from Andy Warhol hang on the wall, the gigantic computer processor sets in the middle, a side of its wires connect to the human body, speaking about the human will be defeated by robots (like scientific film from 1970s). It is decontextualised with the nowadays conversation of how to be a human in cybernetic

4'33"
by John Cage

Directed, Photographed & Edited by
Joel Hochberg

world, the world that we experience is more of remote control, online communication, activities in virtual community... In my perspectives, the visual languages of “past experience” in theatre more links with symbol that has straight forward meanings, especially reflecting on objects, colours and materials. “nowadays experience” is highly connected with visual elements that indicate the attribute of uncertainty, it flows and grows with unpredictable situation.

Following this idea, I choose CGI techniques as my main visual practise to discover probabilities that demonstrate my understanding of how stage, performance, theatre could be transformed when situations in present time are uncertain. It is not only an innovative technique to present how visual elements have been developed with the growth of technology, highly associated with the idea that my traditional form of performing on stage can be transformed as a more contemporary, more virtual way, but also effectively illustrates my concept of a net in which I am confronting the epistemic domination from post-modernism and post industrialism. The most motivating part of CGI techniques is that I am no longer limited by symbolic meanings from objects that are pervasively recognisable. Using the human body as an example - traditionally we see skin colour, shape proportions, features as the first expression, assuming what the body’s character could be. These expressions that we gain from the first glance of the character, will persist to be an identical conclusion throughout the discovering of his/her personal background, social statues in narrative. However, In CGI techniques, I see “Body” as a fluid form illustrating that human beings and human social organisations are self-organising structures, and that form is more essential than matter. In my arguments, the visual presentations of the “body” are not necessarily constrained by its characteristics, it could be a growing signal wave constantly saying that I am drinking a coffee with you in online room NO2.

P4: Outcome (presented by project Enter the Void)

Images From “Enter the void” 2019

Enter the Void (2018), is a 4 minutes 30 seconds experimental animated film, is the visual outcome of my research process during my bachelor studies.

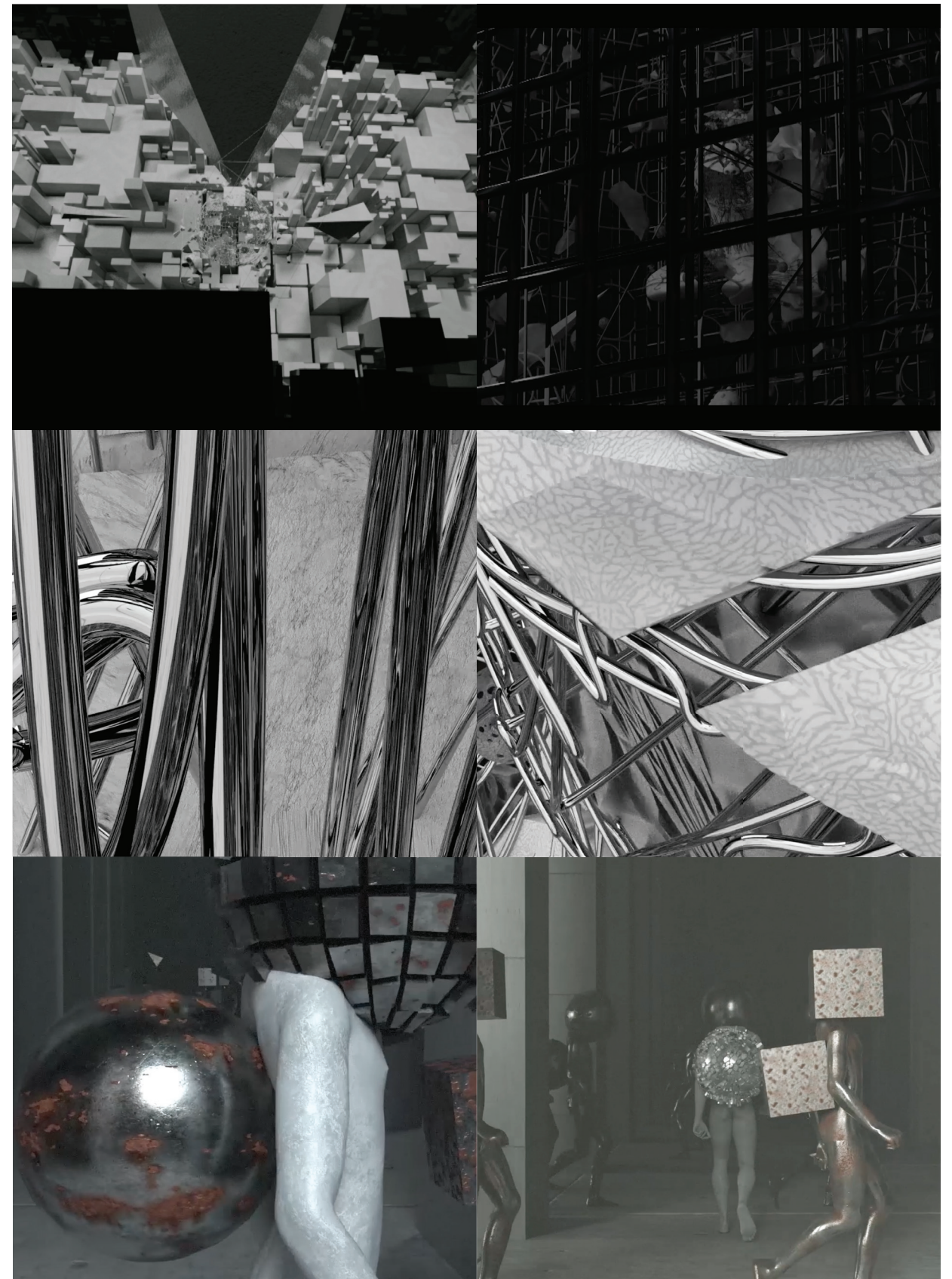
The moving elements within it – a broken head connected by metal nets floating in an infinitely dark space; a figure with marble textured skin falls into a concrete jungle and breaks apart; a group of figures walk robotically while their geometrical heads constantly transform – are all constructed by computer generated graphics. The film does not follow a linear narrative. All moving images represent a series of expressions of the core questions in my research:

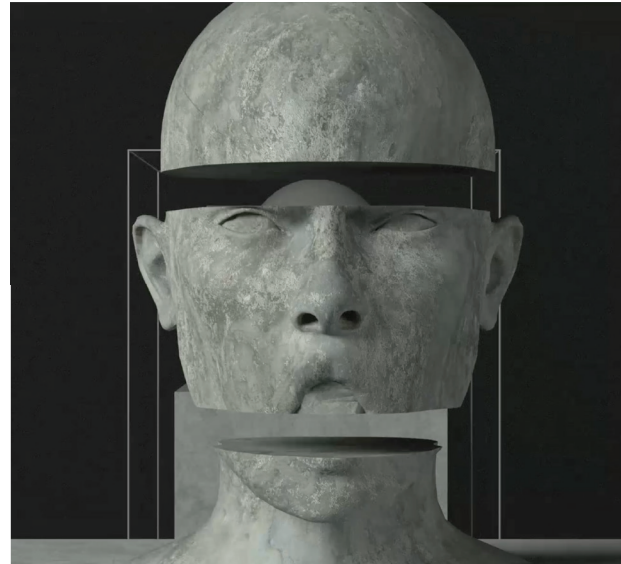
How can individual subjects recognise their own situations and the circumstances that dominate and shape them?

How can they recognise themselves as a part of a community that could effectively oppose these situations?

These questions come back to my definition of identity. In short, my 21 years lived experience in China does not give me enough input to realise the risk of domination in/of collective identity, which means that I am unable to clear my individual identity in different conditions) mainly pointing at the influence of post-industrialisation and post-modern theory, that forms up the western context in art or society).

This is because I experienced a rapid change in Chinese society, with the transformation of the technological landscape over a period of 10 year. Here I experienced in a context of rapid modernisation, from one black and white TV in the village to the internet in every household. In the same 10 years, my hometown changed from a barren field to a land of high-tech infrastructure that demonstrate the achievement of post-industrialisation. However, there is an imbalance between technological developments and the evolution of spiritual culture, (like materialism, sensualism, which the majority following blindly). At this time laws were not upgraded for this postmodern society, stereotypical thinking, conservative cultural perspectives dominated. This confused my thought of constructing a self-value system in society. My work expresses this cultural confusion and acceleration - the figures in the work express this confusion (this is an experience that millions of people had across a continent. In this case, the discussion of my identity is based on perceptions that are manipulated by the social phenomena, which dispose of the conscious interaction. The visual research on this film can be contextualised in relation to how to deconstruct its “Physical Body/Non physical body” condition within the context of hyper-normalisation [Adam Curtis 2016].

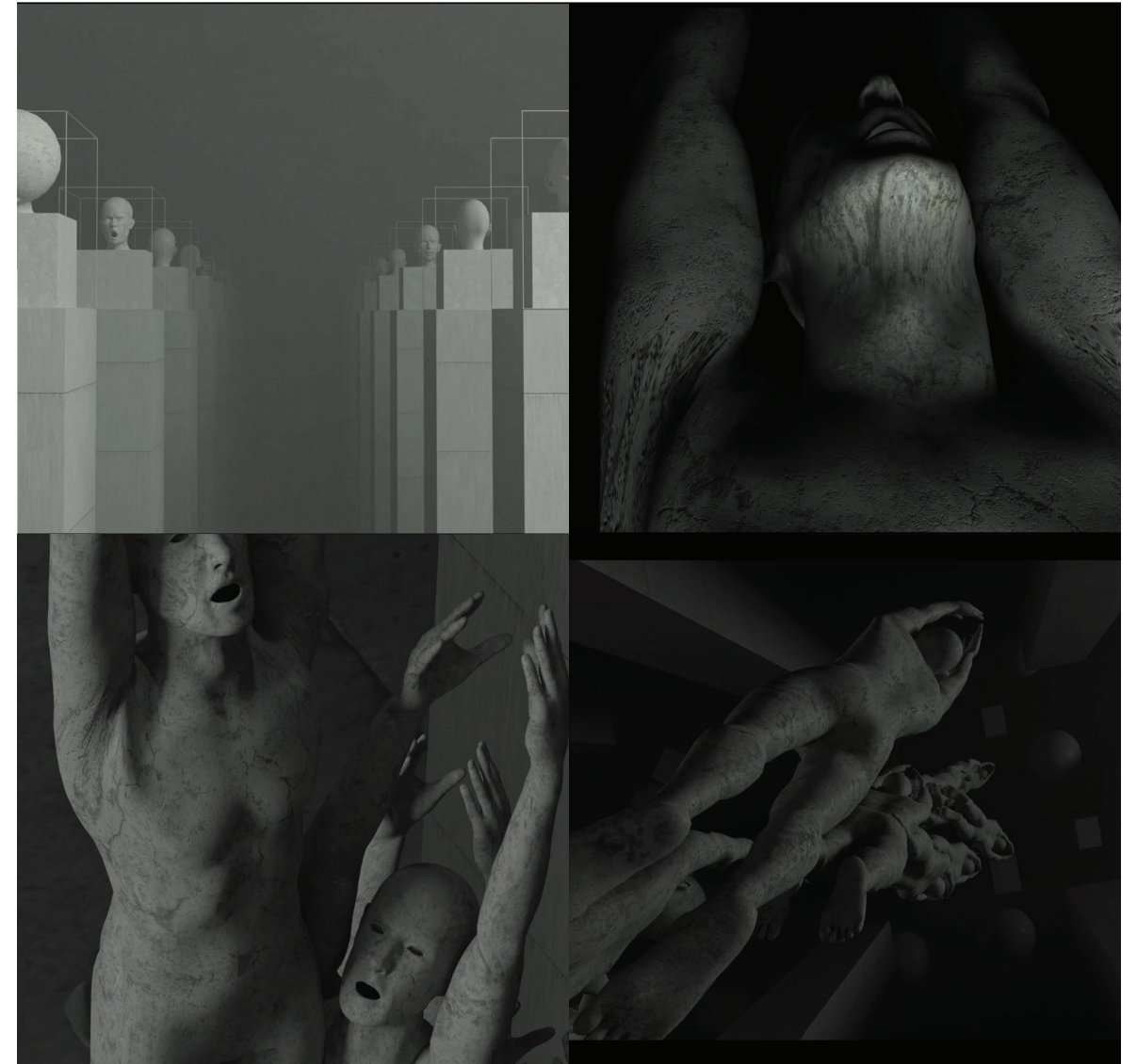




Images From “ Enter the void” 2019

Like the title Enter the void, I see “body” as a special organism that is embodied with a system. What if it will be (in the future) deconstructed as multiple characters, when changes of system are drastic and all-pervasive. Personally, I tend to visually start an open conversation, talking about the journey of how I struggled to shape and reshape my identity in a confused situation through the reconsideration of my own physical reality. Rather than having a stable explanation for what my identity is, it ends up being an infinite movement that concentrates on the inner interaction between who (I am) and where (I am).

The visual presentation of Enter the void refers to how I transform physical theatre objects, such as stage decorations, dim lighting sets, people with costume, video installation and its coalition during the study in Time Based Design, into digital elements that focus the attention on the relationship between society (relating to influences from technology, science and postmodernism) and individual identity. Enter the Void is a touchstone for discovering subsequent work in my master study, particularly in the development of articulating visual languages from personal abstractions to metaphorical symbols through CGI techniques. Meanwhile, the theoretical research behind Enter the void triggers me to think progressively about the relationship between the effects of technological landscapes and human existence in a multidisciplinary way. In order to achieve the conditions to continue my further research, I have started a master study in the department of Lens Based Media.



Images From “ Enter the void” 2019 Groningen

P5: Thinking of Media

My First-year master study at the department of Lens Based Media has two stages, clearly divided by the time when Covid lock down policies were implemented in the Netherlands. My central point in the first period of study is to explore the ideas(aim to figuring out the significance of computer generated graphics as my own visual language, and in depth research on the theory of deconstruction in relation to the human body(focusing on its desire and drives) as a principle of identity) through the school practice. In order to have a better understanding on the principle of photography and cinematography, we had possibilities to work on: building a different format of an analog camera, using laser-cut wood; making photo books with the idea of redesigning its composition, layout and content; participating in an entire working process of a 16mm analog film. Those experiments assemble a very wide range of resources to substantiate and promote my way of using moving images.To reflect on what I have learned through those practise, I have started working with the “EYE museum” on my project titled Louder Louder. Louder Louder is a 3 minutes 8 seconds short experimental CGI film, in which I collaborate with my band [SunMass]. This film mainly consists of four Scenes:

Scene one: hundreds of people (there are three different moving conditions on those groups of people: injured walking, crawling like a zombie, creeping forward) are moving collectively towards one direction where a beam of light slowly shines into an infinite dark space.

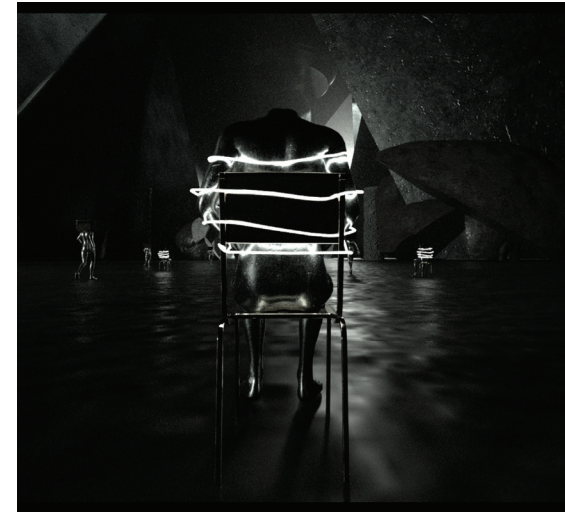
Scene two: one figure (coming from scene one, body shape is similar to a human, the skin is paper-white) walking on the endless path. There are a few gigantic broken human statues (first one is kneeling on the ground with its head down; The second spreads its legs and hold its head; Third one opens its leg and arms; Fourth one stands 30 degrees and holds hand behind the beck.) and polished artificial hills stand above this path, connected and twisted by numerous of metal cables.

Scene three: In an infinite black space, there are numbers of transparent glass boxes that only can be witnessed, and some of broken wire frames stay inside. Those wire frames inseparably connect with figures (with polished marble skin, headless) who are manipulated by the movements of the wires. All movements follow a certain angle in an exaggerated way.

Scene four: In a transparent glass box, hundreds of faceless statues are lining up behind a mask that makes different dramatic expressions, and they are imitating each other.



Images from <Louder Louder>
MAR-2020 EYE MUSEUM



Images from <Louder Louder>
MAR-2020 EYE MUSEUM

The content of my film was based on the broader theme called “Cloud Cuckoo Land” (a state of absurdly, over-optimistic fantasy or an unrealistically idealistic state where everything is perfect), the theme that has been decided by our department. In relation to my own comprehension, my reflections of modern society, it is an ironic way to discourse the “nation state” as a symbol of absolute control, the imposition of technological domination on human existence. When I tend to translate this theory through visual elements, lots of fragmental images from the film of “Blade Runner 2048” or “The fifth elements” immediately came into my mind. [these are films that question post industrial society. I confront similar situations- facing things that are completely new to me; individualism and capitalism - what are they and how they inform my experience of my own identity.] It is the relationship between technological development and popular culture that imposes a crucial influence on how I question my self-existence in the context, and addresses an idea of deconstructing a body’s status and conditions. Therefore, I conclude my theory through computer graphics, combined with electronic soundscapes. Notably, instead of bringing a clear story outline, “Louder Louder” presents an abstract atmosphere not only where I leave my question and confusion (what are those unpredictable factors that led to the domination of technological environments; the advantage of technology replaces the function of my physicality and mentality) to the people that I would like to communicate with, but also expressing the absurd feelings of what am i confronted by (loss of identity/ disability of shaping my identity in current situations).

After completing the progress of “Louder Louder”, I noticed that my way of visually transforming expressional abstractions into symbolic objects causes a consequence in which I am unable to communicate effectively with the audience. This is because the structure of storyline is unclear, and all visual establishment of characters are alienated with narratives. Subsequently, my following practice concentrates on reflecting on those issues (how to synthesize the relationship between moving images and sound effects; how to form an atmosphere in which the audience feels a sense of belonging), which I started to experiment more on by making small scale animations. The time came on the 10th March 2020, when the Dutch government officially announced the “Lock down” policy. There is no denying that my lived experience and unstable self-consciousness, during the lockdown time, drives me to research further on my graduation project: Unframed.

P6: Towards “Unframed”

Before elucidating on the working progress of my project “Unframed”, I would like to draw your attention to my experiences in the Netherlands in 2020, from the time Covid-related news spread widely, This has a bearing on the development of my work during and after that period. What I have been through during lock down was that every day I plugged into the internet, and engaged in the virtual experience that enacted a division between the material body that exists on one side of the screen and the computer simulacra that seemed to inhabit the inside of the screen (and my mind). I became deeply involved with the online community, spending over eight hours on the average day online, mostly keeping track of the latest Covid news or watching international debates on how this virus globally affects individuals, artist groups, and culture in general.

This immersive experience in virtual space meant that I became gradually unaware of the overwhelming feelings brought about by my limited physical conditions (my moving space was only eight square meters throughout the first period of lock down), and my bodily desires were marginalised as my spiritual needs embraced with online society since I had spent most of time online.

Imagine: I am alone in the room, except for two computer terminals flickering in the dim light. The four vents on the top of the terminals produce an intense breathing sound. I use the terminals to communicate with two entities in another room, whom I can't see. Later, more entities come into that room, which has to be enlarged to a room of an immeasurable size or divided into separate rooms. I continuously communicate from one to the other without having any boundaries. This continued action constitutes my lived experience, mutating into an expression in which my body became a kind of a bodiless fluid flowing between different substrata without the loss of meaning or form. In this context a new question arises: why do I need the body's superfluous flesh, and most importantly in this instance: Who am I?

P7: Unframed First Experiments

There are two notable experiments that illustrate the development of my theory of embodiment as research in my experimental film Unframed. I also think of visual form in the film as a development of the perspectives I developed within the discourse of theatre. In my early visual research, my central interest of how to translate emotional abstractions into metaphorical objects in the virtual space has two aspects:

The presence of the “body” has been constantly controlled and manipulated by the “time” and

“space”, constructing a question of whether the existence of “body” merely presented as a function that only works for a bigger system (society, human culture, industry, and so forth).

How could I find myself in cyberspace, where all sensory information and communications have been transformed into sophisticated networks.

The core value of those two aspects concentrates on “body”, a biological organ that processes an inter-communication system allowing the self to be identified, be interacted with, be perceived and to be connected within a bigger system. The relationship between “body” and “bigger system” is the function of “body”. The “body” cannot be individually active without being supported by a bigger system.

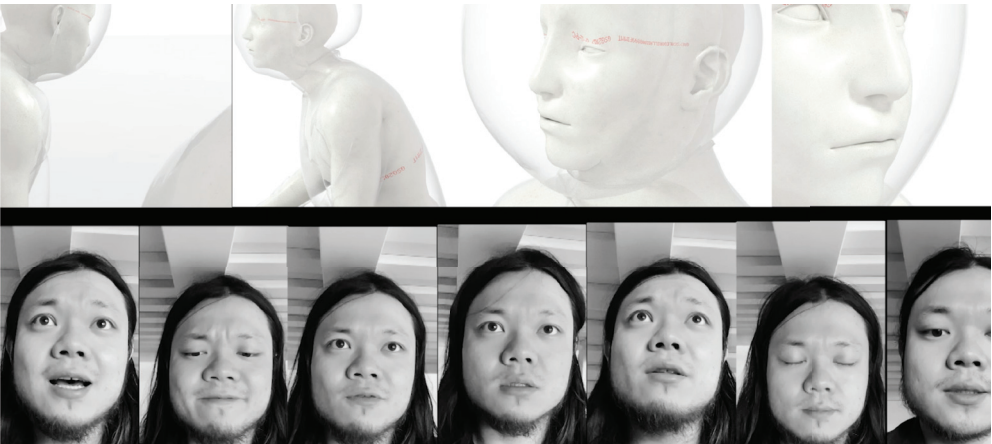
With the concepts of “time” and “space” has been blurred by situation where the structure of bigger system has been deconstructed into million pieces of information, “Body” finds a possibility of transforming its natural structures (biological organ) in those information pieces could establish an independent principle, coalescing fluently with everything except this bigger system. Therefore, what is the translation of this body in this context, and how?

I have established three types of figures depicting how a different “body” illustrates their position in the narrative. There three bodies that have the same patterns of appearance: completely white skin with a polished, plastic texture, a barcode on the left side of the head and a transparent plastic uniform that fully covers the body. Their facial expression is robotic and rigid. They each have distinct body shapes – one is fat, one is muscular, and the last is skinny. In my early narrative, they present a condition of “body” which particularly works with the principle I called “information bodies” (which receive information, direct information and convey information). In addition to these three figures, there are two other distinctive figures: a Cyborg body and a human body (these present conflicting statues-status-states in the context of the film):. In general, the shape of the cyborg body relates to how human looks, and its arms and legs are mounted on the rocks or ruined sculptures, so only the head appears. It has metallic skin and white X rays emit through its eyes. Horizontally, you see densely geometrical patterns flicker irregular light signals on its surface. When you zoom into details, you see the shape of a computational formula that is constantly calculating and analysing data. The figure of the human is headless, and the texture of its skin is similar to old marble, its body is uniform, in renaissance style

Narrative goes like this: the human body is looking for their head. With the guidance from the information body, they find the cyborg body who offers them a head, but for the price of being merged into the system of the cyborg body. What does the human choose? In my early version, information body presents a character that is predominated by collective decisions, based on data statistics and data analysis presented by graphical information (like seeing a negative trend graph of stock quotation leads to selling off stock, or buying more medical products when death rates arise during the period of widespread pestilence.) In my context, I assume a situation that in the time of development of the scientific technology and information networks, people only interact with the partial and superficial-phenomena measured by data statistics and analytics. In every single minute, this world is constituted by data that gets constantly transformed as a new noun, a new idea, a new slogan, a new product, a new standard comes into exitance...and a minute later they break it down and renew it. Proving that the novelty is better, stronger, faster. It culminates in a disoriented circulation of data that is far beyond my understanding of the whole or nature of the matter. The information body is identified by its clean, pure, transparent figures and its rigid, robotic body language and speaking voice. The signal flashing through the barcode announces the loss of the human ability to communicate, to understand.

The cyborg body decides the principle of human activities, and also the construction of the natural human environment. This system is determined by calculating data – which points to the transformation of human civilisation through a variety of expressions, like music, literature and poetry – into a consolidated form of code. The embodiment of the Cyborg body is fully written by

coding, and dominates the formation of the information body and human body in specific situations. On one hand, the Cyborg body foretells that the body as a container is no longer needed, and traditional human activities and human societies will be marginalised. On the other hand, the Cyborg body attempts to find a way to preserve human heritage which is not completely replaced by code: the human body. The appearance of the human body relates to the representation of an ancient sculpture, and the dress is also influenced by traditional western culture. Compared with others, they do not have a head in the beginning, because in the present, there is no head of the right size that would fit the body. The human body for me is the most powerful figure to illustrate my current situation: being confused in a “space” where my cultural background and lived experience doesn’t have close connection to it, being lost in the “time” when all the footage on materiality attests to its absence, and in which presence is proved by virtuality. Therefore, what can I rely on? Memory? Memory seems unreliable. The headless human body illustrates my own alienation. wAfter forming the characters, I have started to research the story line, and write my first script:



Live recording of how different characters speak/ facial expression/

Cast of Characters:
Information body: IB
Human body: HB.
Cyborg body: CB

Scene one:

HB came to the space where data is accumulated, and transformed as information in different categories. IB is the main communicator here, arranging the allocation of information. Based on the conversation from IB: there is not much “Beneficial” information left to help HB find a head. However, indefinite information comes into the space and embraces HB, IB feels that this new piece of information could help HB but would also threaten the whole system. They ask CB for help.

Scene two:

HB comes into an industrial space where they find millions of figures that look the same as HB, all standing in a robotic way. They are all looking towards CB. CB processes data while activating those figures towards different working departments in the data centre. He notices that HB is different than all the other figures and attempts to assimilate HB. HB looks around, and tries to escape. However, CB repeatedly drags HB back to the same place with force.

Chapter Three:

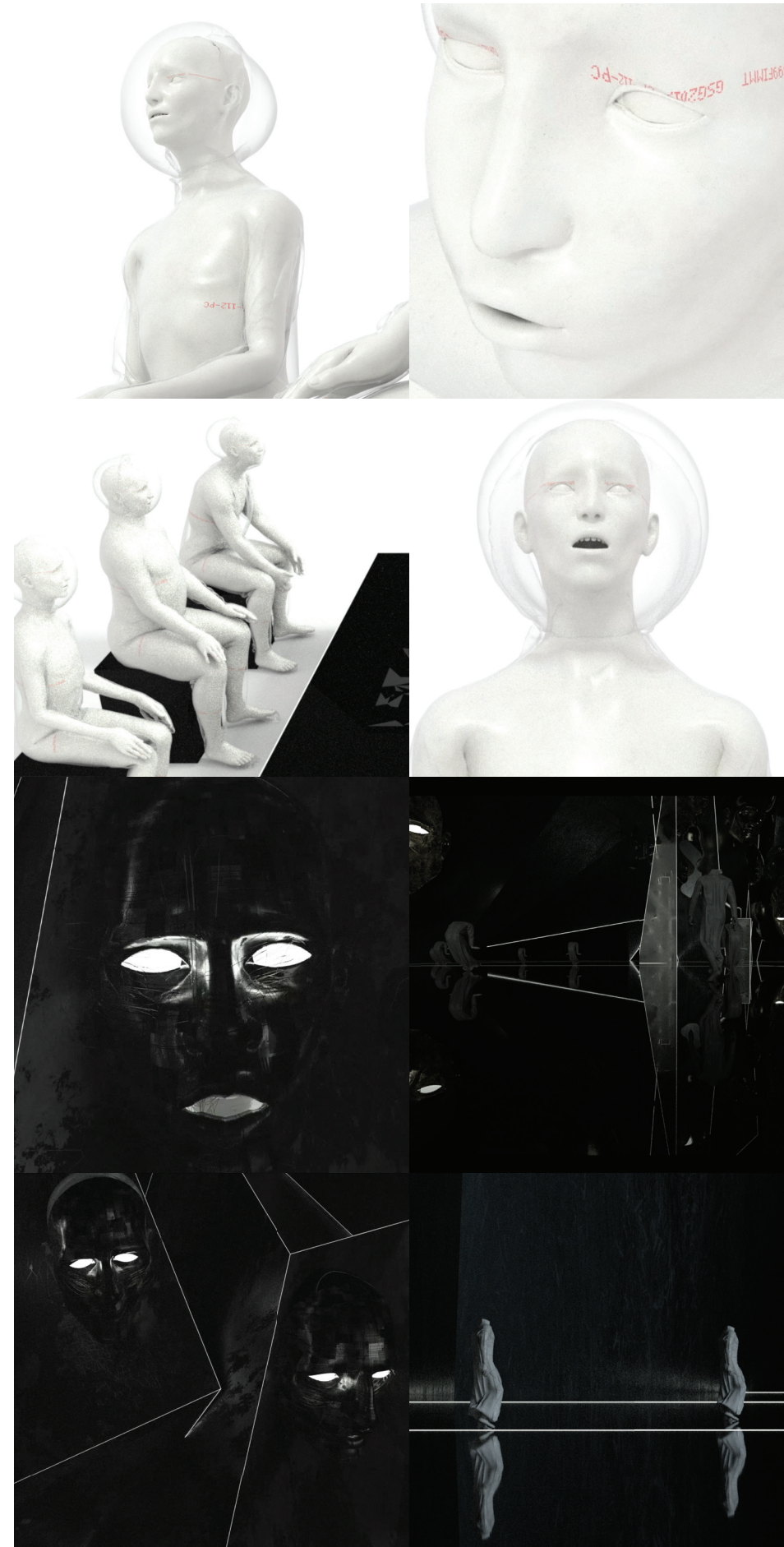
In a space that looks like a theatre. All the HB looking figures surround the stage. HB is standing amongst them. IB mounts the stage, and starts to make an announcement. While listing his speech, all figures under the stage start growing their head from their headless bodies, including HB. However, HB resists growing its head in this situation, and struggles to get away. The more HB struggles, the more HB’s surface is filled with broken parts. In the end, HB has a full-grown head shape with a broken surface. The texture on HB’s surface is a mixture of marble and real human skin (the rest of the figures have grown a head with a marble texture).

Scene Four:

HB lays on the ground, singing a melody to the audience of HB looking figures surrounding him. IB sits in front of HB, and tries to have a conversation with HB. They don’t understand each other even though they use the same language system (code). In the end, the body of HB falls apart, breaking down into different messages (numbers, marks) spreading into the air.

Scene Five:

Returning to the space in Scene One, IBs are still working on the visualisation of data. For them, it is just the repeat of the time. They speak about what HB experienced, and conclude that they were always doomed to fail. In this narrative, I attempt to illustrate the fact that the body is being lost. The presence of the body has been deconstructed by the situations in which the relationship between information body, cyborg body and human body has been presented in a poetic way. On the other hand, I wish the way that visually presents their relationship in different situations is related to theatre performance.



First experiments of “Unframed” visual moving images

P8: Unframed Second Experiment

While I am organising 3D characters, dialogues, various activities - within a virtual environment, the fact remains that those elements are more related to emotional self-expression: the way to present information body, cyborg body, human body and its coalition is confusing to understand. Namely, through their appearance, interactions and body languages, they are not different enough from each other to identify themselves in the narrative. The question is: how do I make sure that people know which body is which and what they are actually doing in the scenes . I started to reflect on the storyline, to think what I really wanted to say. I concluded that the symbol of information body, cyborg body, human body (IB, CB and HB) are all me in different conversations, and the central idea in these conversations revolves around the same issue. In the system of society, having an organic body is seen as a concrete condition to present the human existence, but from what I have experienced, the function of the organic body has been replaced by a new format: information. The human body is reduced to its capability to function in virtual reality by producing data. The conversation of the organic body is controlled by information. This causes the switch towards: I=information. Interestingly, the way to visualise information could be divided into two aspects.

Towards Materiality

(1)Reality is a program run on a cosmic computer, and information is written and read and executed as a universal code that underlies the structure of matter, energy, spacetime of everything that exists. The code is instantiated in elementary units that occupy two states: on or off. Within this interpretation, I emphasise its materiality, and point at those technical artefacts that help to make information a part of everyday life. From black and white TV to the internet, from morphing pro-

grammes used in the 1960s Japanese cartoon, to the sophisticated visualisation programs used to calculate the most accurate trajectories of space travel, information is increasingly perceived as an interpenetrating material form. It is not bodiless, it has a direct impact on the lived reality and materiality. Especially for users who may not know the exact material processes involved, the impression is created that pattern is predominant over presence. From here I would perceive information as more mobile, more important, more essential than material forms (in our contemporary reality, governed by technological systems).

If I see the world as a set of a closed information systems, and information is constantly transforming its efficacy. How can I find myself in this drift? I have established a central premise that the mutually constitutive interaction between the components of a system radically construct an informational feedback loop. This loop functions to reinforce a connection from a system to its environment. This is because my journey of discovering who I am starts with the basic attributes that are visually presented by numbers (they are already encoded). They are embodied with situations of how I choose to be alive and how I am forced to be alive during the pandemic time in postmodern society. The feedback loop processes how those numbers [the code] constantly impose information to my senses, awareness, perceptions, which I in turn translate into another format. This format of information in fact derives its efficacy from the material infrastructures it appears to obscure. However, no information crosses the boundary separating the system from its environment. We don't see a world out there that exists apart from us. Instead, we see only what our systemic organisations allow us to see. Alterations of the environment are determined by the system's own structural properties. In the second experiment, information is seen as visual elements

presented in a narrative. It is not only the influence of how bodily functions have been transformed and refined through its movement, but also provides an expression: I am always constrained by a feedback loop no matter how the shape of my presence is constructed. In addition to the first experiment, I choose to present the embodiment of information through the soundscape, environment and character's conversations (see in appendix, the screenplay).

wTowards Virtuality

(2)Information viewed as a pattern and not tied to particular instantiation is information free to travel without having the limitation of time and space. I would like to draw some attention to the absence and randomness towards the value of information. In virtual space, my growth of perception is not dependent on sensory information, all lived experience, historical background, and cultural reference cannot be major evidence shaping my being. I am a piece of information that is constantly communicating in present time and space. In this context, abstracting information gave me possibilities to find another dimension to associate with the presence of my body which is constituted by information in its materiality. In the re-edited screenplay, the character of bodies will no longer be divided into three. They are all me, with different detailed appearances. Me as 3D characters in the film become a symbol of everything, you can see it as an abstract figure. In the context, the implication of my body are involved with the values called: communication and control, they all seek the meaning of being presence, they are trying not to be pieces of information that is concretely shaped by space, trends, systems or anything that has a dominate position. These abstractions are my way of searching the meaning of being presence, The script ends with 3 versions of myself having a conversation. Here the characters resolve their situation. Presence and absence no longer matter as the characters learn to transcend their situation.

The story follows this idea, presented narratively as: one of my figures tries to find its head. Through the journey of finding his head, he realises that it doesn't matter if he finds it or not, it is just a never-ending loop, a process.

P9: Bibliography

Screen plays: Unframed

Unfinished and Unframed

The way I write this screen play, especially on the design of the dialogue, is inspired by the film maker Roy Andersson's, Songs from the Second Floor. I attempt to keep conversation as minimal as possible, and body language and facial expressions from figures flat and emotionless. In the context, No@ in scene two [see appendix] tries to say something, trying to communicate with No@'s fellows, but because the influence from data that is analysed by his system, he is not able to use a language that they commonly understand. In this case, I was thinking to use soundscapes or glitch vocals to visualise this part, but I have not decided yet.

Besides that, the way to visualise the space still needs to be improved, particularly on scene four where the highlight of whole story happens. I am still doubting about whether would I use the industry room inside of gigantic head as an implication that I can't avoid a situation of being a component on the industrial chain, and stair connecting to the floors with constantly falling heads depicts that I am forced to producing.... Those embodiments are too strong and too dominant. could I find a way to visualise the space where indicates the expression that even though I recognise the situation is harsh and unacceptable, but I calmly take it. As I mentioned in the dialogue: everything has limits, time has limits, body has limits. I would say this is not tragedy, this is how I start to give access to myself in the current situation, and try to seek possibilities in my research process of "body is lost in limitations". Even though the outline of this film is getting clear, the visual research is still ongoing, it reaches out to infinity.

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